

## Teacher Preparation

Nia realized that summarizing key pieces of information was a life skill that her students needed to practice. Without that ability, they would struggle not only in their academic and adult careers, but also in friendly conversations about current events and personal situations.

To allow adequate application for this topic, Nia turned to text passages as a source of practice for identifying important ideas, main events, and key points. She listed many things that the students had already read, and a few poems and other quick reads that could be accomplished in just a few minutes in class. Once that was done, she went back through her list and carefully selected enough titles to give one piece of text to each group; she then made sure that each group member would have an individual copy of the reading. Her other preparations included dividing her students into groups of four, pushing their desks together to make tables for four, preparing a model to use, and gathering large pieces of colored bulletin board paper and markers. Finally, she mentally rehearsed the lesson, anticipating her students' questions, confusions, and accomplishments.

## Activity Starter

Once the students had settled into their groups of four, Nia began by asking them what it means to summarize. She listened to the students' comments but found scattered knowledge. She assured them that today they would learn to summarize a passage, which is an important life skill for many reasons.

Nia began by reading the short passage upon which she had based her model. She explained how one goes about summarizing a text, which is to read thoroughly and make notes on key points based on things like: the title, subheadings, topic sentences, main ideas, dates, and important events. She led the class in quickly doing this.

She then asked each group to make certain that one member was seated in each corner of their make-shift table. Next, she instructed them to gather one piece of paper to spread out before the group and four markers, one per member. She now provided each group with four copies of a single passage of text. Nia asked the students to each read the text silently and, using their corner of the large paper, to jot down the key points, including important events and main ideas.

Once the individual note taking was complete, Nia instructed the students to tear off their corners of the paper containing these notes, which left the larger center available for the group to write their joint summary. She explained that this center was the place for them to combine and record their notes while eliminating repetitive information. The students were to organize the information beginning with a main idea statement and then summarizing the most important events in the text. She reminded them that the 5 W's (who, what, when, where, and why) generally provide a solid guide.

Once each group finished, Nia posted their summaries on the wall and sponsored a Gallery Walk, which involved one member from each group standing at the group's summary, while the rest of the class moved among the posters, reading and asking questions. Once this was completed, Nia made general closing comments on the success of the activity, leading the class in sharing a summary of what they had just done!